

## **STUDENT THESIS PROCEDURES**

There are two options for the thesis requirement: 1) Traditional Thesis format or 2) Journal Manuscript Thesis format. **Selection of the Journal Manuscript Thesis format must be approved by both the department chair and the thesis committee. A copy of the Journal Manuscript format must be submitted electronically with your final thesis to the Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Education.** Once you and your committee have chosen a format, please read and follow the procedures for that format carefully. Do not combine formats.

### **General Guidelines**

1. The graduate student must obtain approval of the graduate program coordinator and the department chairperson to undertake a thesis project. It is the responsibility of the chairperson or the graduate program coordinator, in conference with the student, to recommend a potential graduate thesis advisor who must be a graduate faculty member and a member of the student's department. Junior faculty are expected to be closely guided by the graduate program coordinator. This choice should be made as early as possible in the student's career as a graduate student, but in no case should research begin before he/she has completed nine (9) credit hours of graduate course work.
2. The prospective graduate thesis advisor will, in conference with the student, survey possible areas of study and methodologies, choose a tentative project, and accept the student as an advisee. After such conference, if the thesis advisor believes that the student would (for justifiable reasons) be incapable of successfully completing a thesis study in his/her area of competence, the thesis advisor will notify the student to that effect and refer him/her back to their department chairperson or graduate program coordinator for further conference.
3. If the graduate thesis advisor accepts the student as an advisee and they come to an agreement on a tentative project, the thesis advisor will discuss the membership of the thesis committee with the student. This thesis committee is made up of the advisor and two or more members of Commonwealth University graduate faculty appointed to serve on an ad hoc basis. Its purpose is to assist the thesis advisor and the graduate student in planning, developing, and presenting a graduate thesis in a form which will fulfill the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Education, Master of Science, Master of Science in Nursing, or Doctorate of Audiology from Commonwealth University. The thesis committee also evaluates the student's thesis and oral defense of the thesis. The construct of committee members can include faculty members not in the home department and non-university employees. Proper graduate faculty status must be attained by all committee members. It is recommended that the majority of the committee members be from the discipline granting the degree.
4. When the graduate thesis advisor and the student agree on the membership of the committee, the graduate thesis advisor or the student will contact each prospective member of the committee and ask if they would be willing to serve.
5. When the thesis committee has been formed, the graduate thesis advisor will recommend the committee members' names to the Dean of Graduate Education through the chairperson of the department. A "Form for the Appointment of a Thesis Committee" is available for this purpose from the School of Graduate Education, and also attached to this document (page 10). The Graduate Dean will officially appoint the committee and notify its members of their appointment. The graduate thesis advisor will normally serve as chairperson of this committee.
6. Once the thesis committee has been approved by the Graduate Dean, thesis credits can be scheduled. After a student has completed six credits, they must register for 1 credit, each Fall or Spring semester, until the final thesis is approved by the Graduate Dean.

7. After the committee has been formed, the student will submit a proposal of the project to the committee for their final approval. The format and length of the proposal will be determined by each department. The proposal will also indicate whether the Traditional or Journal Manuscript Thesis option is selected. **If Journal Manuscript is selected, a copy of the Journal Manuscript guidelines must be submitted with the proposal.**
8. The attached "Thesis or Departmental Paper Proposal Assurance of Compliance with University Research Requirements" (page 11) form must be completed by the student and thesis advisor. The form must be submitted with the initial thesis proposal.
9. In cases where a graduate student's research (for thesis or departmental paper) requires the use of human or animal subjects, the student must seek appropriate approvals through the Human Subjects Committee and/or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Students should discuss the application process with their faculty advisor and obtain the appropriate approval application forms from the School of Graduate Education. ALL THESES OR DEPARTMENTAL PAPERS IN WHICH HUMAN OR ANIMAL RESEARCH SUBJECTS HAVE BEEN USED MUST SHOW DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE (AT THE MINIMUM, A COPY OF THE SIGNED APPROVAL FORM) OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE OF IACUC APPROVAL OF THE RESEARCH PROTOCOL.

Students should be aware that all survey research must be reviewed, even though the nature of the study may prove to be exempt from full review by the Human Subjects Committee.

10. When approval of the thesis proposal has been granted, the graduate thesis advisor will send the Dean of Graduate Education confirmation of approval by the thesis committee.
11. At various times during the actual work on the thesis, the committee may be convened by the graduate thesis advisor to discuss with the student any changes in subject matter or methodology which may seem advisable.
12. When the student has completed some or the entire thesis in draft form acceptable to the thesis advisor, he/she will submit one copy of this material to each member of the committee for evaluation. The committee will report its decision to the student at a subsequent meeting and return the material to the student for revision, completion, or preparation in final form.
13. The student will then prepare the thesis in final form and submit it to the committee for approval. This format will be in accordance with the instructions set forth in an acceptable thesis guide as approved by the committee (traditional thesis format) or in the Journal Manuscript Thesis Format. A Guide to the Journal Manuscript Thesis Format is attached (page 8). The title page (Sample 1 or Sample 4 for the Doctorate of Audiology), abstract (Sample 2), and approval page (Sample 3) as required by the School of Graduate Education shall be the first three pages of the final thesis.

Margins shall be not less than 1 1/2" at the left edge and 1" at the top, bottom, and right edges of the paper. No grade will be assigned the thesis at this time pending completion of the oral examination. After the oral examination, the committee will assign a single grade to the student's performance on the total thesis project, that is, on the thesis and the oral defense conceived as a unit.

14. An oral defense by the student will be held by the committee on the specific subject and the general area of the thesis. The committee will either pass or fail the student on the oral defense and the thesis itself. If the student fails the oral defense of the thesis, and it is the opinion of the committee that the student should be given a second oral examination, the date for the second oral will be set at this time and a grade of "R" will be recorded. If the student fails the oral exam a second time, a grade of "F" will be recorded within Banner. In case of disagreement as to the grade, a majority of the committee will rule.

The day the student passes the oral defense, each committee member will sign the approval/signature

sheets. The student must bring the approval/signature sheets to the defense printed on **100% cotton thesis paper of at least 20 lb. weight**. Once signed, the student will bring the signature pages to the School of Graduate Education.

15. After the student passes his/her oral defense, the student will electronically send the Graduate Dean a copy of his/her final thesis. The Graduate Dean will review the thesis and make suggestions/changes that he/she deems necessary and will relay the changes to the student. Once the student makes the necessary changes, the student will then send the final copy back to the Dean of Graduate Education. The Dean of Graduate Education will then give the final approval (via email) to the student.
16. The student will be provided with a link to the Institutional Repository [https://bloomu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0TBaaCuhrWClwiG](https://bloomu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0TBaaCuhrWClwiG). This will allow Commonwealth University to publish the student thesis and make available on the internet via its digital Research Commons.
17. After final approval, the student will then print the thesis on **100% cotton thesis paper of at least 20 lb. weight**. A minimum of two hard copies must be bound - one copy for the department, one copy for the library. Any additional copies may be purchased at the students' discretion. A fee will be charged for the binding of all theses. The student must pay for **all** bound theses.
18. All copies of the final theses must be sent directly to the School of Graduation Education. The Dean of Graduate Education will then sign the original signature pages and the original signed signature sheets will be inserted into the final printed theses. The School of Graduate Education will send the thesis out to be bound; thesis pick up occurs once a month. Once the bound theses are returned to the School of Graduate Education, the department will be notified to pick up the bound thesis and then notify the student.
19. **For students who select the journal manuscript format, it is the responsibility of the thesis chair to submit a copy of the journal submission to the School of Graduate Education.**
20. Upon acceptance of the committee recommendation by the Dean of Graduate Education, the work of the committee will be regarded as completed and it will be automatically disbanded.
21. Granting of Thesis Student Degrees
  - A student's degree will not be granted until:
    - the final thesis is approved by the Dean of Graduate Education via his signature on the signature sheets, a copy of the title page & signed signature sheet is received by the Registrar's office, the final grade is submitted within Banner, and all "R" grade(s) are changed to the final grade.
  - The last day a thesis will receive final approval from the Graduate Dean is 14 days after the last day of classes.
  - If a student does not receive final approval within those 14 days, they must register for 1 credit of thesis each semester (Fall and Spring) until the final thesis is approved.

## Format Options for Thesis

### Traditional Thesis Format:

Most programs offered at Commonwealth University require APA formatting. The most recent edition of the APA Manual of Style is the 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Please refer to the APA Manual when writing your thesis.

### Journal Manuscript Thesis Format:

At the option of the department and the thesis committee, the Graduate School will accept a Journal Manuscript Thesis Format in lieu of the traditional thesis format. Selection of the Journal Manuscript Thesis format must be approved by both the department and the thesis committee. The thesis chair, in consultation with the student, approves the selection of the target journal. The completed journal manuscript style thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Education should include the following:

- Abstract
- Title Page
- Approval Page (signature page)
- Acknowledgements
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if necessary)
- List of Figures (if necessary)
- List of Appendices
- Manuscript
- Appendices

The following section headers of the manuscript submitted to the Graduate School may differ according to the target journal format requirements:

- Introduction (no running head on each page as used in many manuscript formats)
- Methods and Procedures (with appropriate subheadings)
- Results (tables and/or figures are included in the text and paginated; with appropriate subheadings)
- Discussion (with appropriate subheadings)
- References (only those cited in the journal manuscript; in required target journal format/style)

### Appendices (order of appearance must follow the sequence cited in text)

1. Human Subjects Research Review (IRB) approval information (if necessary) or Animal Research (IACUC) approval information (if necessary)
2. Raw data (if necessary)
3. Statistical tables, figures, and/or illustrations not included in the journal manuscript (optional)
4. Expanded methods and procedures
5. Other appendices deemed appropriate by the thesis committee
6. Review of Literature including any additional references not used in the journal manuscript (a separate reference list is required at the end of this Review of Literature). Reference format/style must be the same as in the manuscript (target journal).

**\*\*A copy of the target journal's "Guidelines for Authors" and a sample article (with references) from a very recent issue of the target journal must be submitted along with your final journal manuscript thesis draft.\*\***

### Format

The journal manuscript thesis must follow the specific style and format guidelines established by the target journal where publication will be sought (with appropriate modifications as noted above). It is the responsibility of the thesis chairperson and student to be certain that the manuscript is developed in accordance with all aspects of the journal guidelines and School of Graduate Education requirements.

The manuscript to be submitted for publication consideration becomes the main text of the completed bound thesis, which will be processed through the established procedures of the thesis committee and the School of Graduate Education.

### **Appendices in Journal Manuscript Format Thesis**

Information not appropriate for inclusion in the main text of the manuscript must be included in the appendices. Appendices should include anything/everything that would allow for "reliability." For consistency, appendices must follow pagination, margin guidelines, and text quality as established in the APA Manual or other recognized style manual as approved by the thesis committee and the Graduate School.

The appendices become part of the completed bound thesis. Appendices could include, but are not limited to, an expanded or complete review of literature (including a separate reference list in the same style/format as those in the manuscript text); methods/procedures not detailed in the manuscript itself such as selection of subjects, copy of surveys used in the study, complete research design and statistical analysis (including paradigms and hypothesis-null or research); raw data; tables, figures, and/or illustrations not used in the manuscript; and human subjects or animal use procedures. The sequence of appendices should follow the order of citation in the text.

### **Additional Guidelines for Students and Committee Members**

Submission of manuscripts to professional journals for publication consideration involves additional steps not required as part of the usual thesis approval process. For example, the student and thesis chairperson should compose a manuscript submission letter to the target journal. The student and thesis chairperson should also prepare other journal- specific required submission items such as title pages, abstracts, author background information, and running page headers. These items are not part of the submission requirements for thesis approval.

Following successful thesis oral defense, and approval by the Dean of the School of Graduate Education, the manuscript should be properly prepared and mailed to the selected refereed journal for publication consideration. It is assumed that the student (lead author) and thesis chair will coauthor the manuscript. Additional co-authorship of manuscripts and/or presentations by other thesis committee members should be considered and discussed very early in the thesis development phase. **It is strongly recommended that Section 6.21-24 of the 6th Edition of the APA Manual – Ethical Standards for the Reporting and Publishing of Scientific Information (pp. 394-395) be read as part of the thesis development and manuscript submission processes.**

**COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE EDUCATION**

**Form for the Appointment  
of a Thesis Committee**

TO: The Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Education

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor of Record

For: \_\_\_\_\_ ID#: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Student (print)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_

The following faculty, having agreed to serve on the Thesis Committee for the above student, are recommended to you for appointment to the committee (a minimum of three faculty are required to form a committee).

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) (Sign) Advisor and Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) (Sign) Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) (Sign) Committee Member

**Approvals:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) (Sign) Program Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) (Sign) Department Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) (Sign) Assoc. Provost and Dean  
of Graduate Education

**I HAVE READ THE THESIS PROCEDURES AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THE TERMS AS SET FORTH THEREIN.**

**STUDENT SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**ANTICIPATED DATE OF THESIS COMPLETION** \_\_\_\_\_

- c: Student / Student File
- Thesis Advisor
- Program Coordinator
- Committee Members

\*\*If Journal Manuscript is selected, a copy of the manuscript guidelines must accompany the final thesis\*\*

# **Thesis or Departmental Paper Proposal Assurance of Compliance with University Research Requirements**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ID# \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name (please print)

Program of Study \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed the thesis or departmental paper proposal submitted by the above named student and have concluded that:

There is no human subject involvement and no human subject research is required

Human subject research review is required

There is no animal use involved and no animal use review is required

Animal use review is required

\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chairperson

A completed copy of this form should be included with the thesis/departmental paper proposal submitted to the School of Graduate Education.

(Thesis Procedures Sample 1)

**THESIS TITLE**

A  
THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE EDUCATION  
of  
COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF \_\_\_\_\_

PROGRAM IN \_\_\_\_\_  
DEPARTMENT OF \_\_\_\_\_

BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Name)

COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

YEAR



(Thesis Procedures Sample 2)

**ABSTRACT**

(300 word abstract)

THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE EDUCATION  
of  
COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF \_\_\_\_\_  
PROGRAM IN \_\_\_\_\_  
DEPARTMENT OF \_\_\_\_\_  
BY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Type Your Name)

The undersigned thesis committee members hereby certify that they have read and recommend to the School of Graduate Education for acceptance the thesis entitled:

\_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Insert Name, Thesis Advisor/Chairperson      Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Insert Name, Committee Member      Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Insert Name, Committee Member      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use extra lines for additional members

APPROVED:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Education      Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Thesis Procedures Sample 4)

**THESIS TITLE**

A  
THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE EDUCATION  
of  
COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTORATE OF AUDIOLOGY

PROGRAM IN AUDIOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH PATHOLOGY

BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Name)

COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

YEAR